



# A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO RESTORE COASTAL AND ESTUARINE HABITAT





Dear Friend,

The rich interplay between the land and the sea creates one of America's most valuable natural, economic, and cultural resources—its estuaries and coasts. In this unique nexus—characterized by the dynamic blending of salt and fresh water during tidal cycles—abundant life is created and nurtured.

Estuaries nurture not only shellfish, fish, and wildlife, but also nourish the human spirit. We are from the sea, and we are continually lured back to its edge, reinforcing the kinship we share with this place as we sail, fish, swim, and relax near a glistening bay or a rocky shore.

And yet, no place on earth more directly embodies the challenge of balancing human needs and the needs of other species than estuaries. By 2025, 75 percent of our population will live within 50 miles of the coast. We must learn how to develop our own habitat while also protecting and restoring the very essence of what binds us to our coasts.

Restore America's Estuaries and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are pleased to present A National Strategy to Restore Coastal and Estuarine Habitat, and we are grateful to the scores of scientists, restoration practitioners, program managers, and others who contributed their expertise and insights. This National Strategy takes a major step toward reclaiming losses of the past 200 years. We look forward to continued collaboration as we move forward and reinvest in our coastal and estuarine habitats.

Best Regards,

Mark Wolf-Armstrong  
President  
Restore America's Estuaries

Scott B. Gudes  
Deputy Under Secretary  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Administration

COVER PHOTOS, clockwise from top left: Steve Delaney, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center; Chesapeake Bay Foundation; NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center; photographer unknown. BACK COVER: NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center.

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**Restore America's Estuaries**

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